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Script and Creating a Religious Identity: The Typography of the Talmud

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Aim of the article. This article deals with the iconic typography of the Talmud page and focuses on the relationship between script and religious identity. It examines changes in design and typography in the modern editions of Steinsaltz, Artscroll, and Koren since the 1980s, and how they led to the removal of some of these editions from the yeshiva world, preventing yeshiva students from using them. *Results.* The Talmud is the central and most influential text in the world of Jewish law. Its study holds great spiritual significance, and many regard it as a means for self-expression and connection to the Torah's oral tradition. During the second half of the 20th century, initiatives were taken to change the traditional layout of Judaic texts. The aim of these initiatives was to create a new "Israeli design" for Judaic texts while remaining loyal to the past. Designers sought to strike a balance between conservation and innovation in aspects such as book design, technological advances in the printing industry, accessibility regarding reading, studying, and prayer, and catering to broader target audiences. In most cases, new book formats were chosen, but at times, such changes generated strong opposition in certain Jewish sectors, resulting in those books being banned from study halls and synagogues. A case in point was Rabbi Steinsaltz's project of redesigning the Talmud to make Talmud study more accessible for struggling learners. Rabbi Steinsaltz changed the format of the Talmud page to a more readable format, using new fonts, additional punctuation, and wider spacing between the lines. This change, however, was not accepted by the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) and parts of the National-Religious public. *Scientific novelty.* Existing research deals separately with the issue of Zionist Hebrew typography and the issue of the ultra-Orthodox society. To the best of our knowledge, so far, no research has directly linked the two issues to examine the ultra-Orthodox approach to design in general and to Hebrew typography in particular. This study contributes to previous research on Hebrew typography, emphasising its role in conveying a social, educational, and ideological message, regardless of the written text's content. *Conclusions.* Judaic texts that are used in the ultra-Orthodox world are visually different in design from those used in the secular and/or National-Religious world. While the ultra-Orthodox staunchly preserve the traditional Judaic book format (albeit with minor changes), the secular world and parts of the National-Religious public welcome books that have a variety of fonts, colorful designs and pictures, decorations, and didactic explanations to aid the reader. The Talmud is a book with a distinct typography and contains a wealth of information. The layout of a Talmud page allowed for a variety of different texts to be combined in one book, making it easier to study. The fixed template, which is exactly the same in all tractates, generates a visual representation of the text so that a large amount of information can be remembered through an "eidetic memory" of images. Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz's

edition of the Talmud (Koren), which changed the traditional page layout to make the text more accessible, remained only partially faithful to the original but brought about a true revolution. For some audiences, this innovative edition represents a pinnacle of Hebrew literature, while for others, it is seen as a violation of the sacred literature and should be banned. There has always been a strong connection between the ultra-Orthodox world and Hebrew typography, and it is still present on a daily basis. The Hebrew letters are cornerstones in the design of the Holy Scriptures. However, the attitude of the ultra-Orthodox world toward modern Hebrew typography as reflected in this study, is one of ambivalence, some acceptance but mostly strong reservations.

Keywords: Talmud; Typography; Israel; Ultra-orthodox

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Introduction

Modern linguistics separates speech and written communication. Writing is often seen as a graphic tool to help in speech (Raphael, 1989). Conversely, social linguistics recognises the value of writing as the most important tool in creating a social, ethnic, nationalistic, and ideological identity (Cooper, 1989). Fishman (1977) notes a particularly strong connection between written text and the creation of a religious identity, a connection that has been preserved for many years in different cultures, especially in the Jewish culture. In fact, until modern times, the adoption of a new language did not require the adoption of its alphabetic system. The adherence of the Jews to their alphabet is not a purely linguistic historical matter but has its roots in the central place where Hebrew typography occupies everything related to the Jews' reference to their holy scriptures.

Recent research and publication analysis. In his book "In Praise of Exile" Ofrat (2000) expands on the period of exile of the Jewish people, in which the text replaced the homeland. This made the Jewish people wander from the written word and to it. Jabes (1977), in his book, writes that the homeland of the Jews is the "Holy Scriptures". The need for the various signs in the Holy Books is similar to the Jewish wandering "... if so, neither a country nor a national home which is a physical land". "The book is my universe, a homeland, a roof and an enigma."

Ladino speakers like Yiddish speakers made sure to write their language in Hebrew letters. The identification with the Hebrew alphabet as the symbol of Judaism as a whole is reflected in the Yiddish speakers' name given to writing in Latin letters "Galchish", the letters of the Christian monks (Galachs) (Bonis, 2005).

Pimental (2007) presents the script as a paradox. On the one hand, writing serves as the only way for us to preserve cultural treasures. However, on the other hand, writing also has a limiting dimension in that the written word cannot convey the thoughts and emotions that preceded it, which are expressed in speech. "The writing testifies to the absence. It is a remnant of the inexhaustible abundance of what could have been said." Plato also believed that writing is foreign to the soul, that its rigidity and fixed patterns miss the subtle vibrations found in it (Derrida, 2002).

The solution to this paradox, in his opinion, is found in the metaphorical meaning of the letter and not only in the literal one.

In the literal sense, the letter is a sign, regardless of its form or the media on which it is written, but in the metaphorical sense the letter is a representation to higher worlds. It is enough to mention the meanings of the word “ot” (which means both a sign and a letter) in the Hebrew language, as in “signs and wonders” “a sign forever” and more, to testify to this word’s connection to the spiritual. Indeed, the Hebrew letter, as the foundation of the holy books, is a phenomenon whose roots were already discussed in the Talmudic period. Sages attributed great importance, holiness, and mystical powers to this letter, and according to the midrash, the world was created with the Hebrew letters (Babylonian Talmud Tractate Brachot page 55a; Bereishit Rabba A 10; Sefer Yetzirah 2:2). The words of the Mishnah in Tractate Brachot about the ten things created on the Sabbath eve between the sunset and darkness and among these ten things were “the script and the letter” (Tractate Avot Chapter 5 Mishna 6). This places the script in a high spiritual rank reserved for a limited number of creations that connect between spirit and matter. Therefore, Biblical and Talmudic typography teaches us to pay attention not only to what is written, but also to what is not written, to the spaces, the large, small, and hanging letters, and between the lines, no less than what is actually written (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 32:36).

This concept, which sees the letter as sacred in itself, created a halachic debate as to whether and under what conditions it is permissible to use the Hebrew letter for mundane purposes.

The Radbaz (2015) writes: “The script itself has great sanctity and several deep secrets depend on it and the shape of the letters, and it is forbidden to use it for mundane purposes.” The Rambam was asked about a person who embroidered verses on a garment that he used for a fringed garment (a *talit* with *tzitzit*), is the act permissible or is it a sin? In his answer, the Rambam disapproved of the act altogether, not only because according to the Talmud, it is not permissible to write complete verses from the Torah anywhere other than the Torah, but because of the denigration of Torah verses by emphasising that the ‘Assyrian script’, in which the Torah was given and in which the Tablets of the Covenant were written, is indecent to use except for Holy Scriptures (Maimon, 1988).

The designers of the holy books attach importance to every detail, including the choice of the font, the size and type of the page, the colour of the paper and the letter, as well as the general pagination, so that the act of prayer and/or study that follows from the book will be respected. Rabbi Steinsaltz connects the word respect (honour) with aesthetics and correct manners.

Frank (2003) testifies about the font he designed in 1908: “When changing a Hebrew font, different considerations must be taken into account than those that play a role in changing a font in other languages. Designers of non-Hebrew fonts do not have to give an account to anyone. Their only determining consideration is the acceptance or rejection of their work by the public. The situation is different when it comes to the design a Hebrew font. Here the Shulchan Aruch must be taken into account. The rules of the Shulchan Aruch concerning the writing of Torah scrolls specify the shape, structure, and composition of each and every letter.”

The Talmud. The Gemara has a very distinct typographical use. The Gemara page itself is a great information centre which includes Mishnah, Talmud, Rashi's commentary, Tosafot, Sefer HaMordechai, Rambam's commentary on the Mishniet, and more. The shape of the page made it possible to combine different essays into the same book, which made studying easier. The page's structure was established in the first Talmud printings (Soncino printing, Italy 1520). Further improvements were made over the years and mainly by the Widow and Brothers Rom Publishing (Steinsaltz, 2001).

The Rom Press, referred to in the Yiddish intonation "Rome", and known as "The Widow and Brothers Rom Printing and Publishing" as well as "Vilna Printing", is a Jewish printing and book publishing house that operated in Vilnius from the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. The printing press became famous thanks to the edition of the Babylonian Talmud that he published in 1880–1886. The edition that established the typeface that began in Italy serves as a basis and design foundation for all editions of the Babylonian Talmud to this day.

The structure reduces the entire text to one page and at the same time distinguishes between the different parts that make up the page, by dividing it into columns. The content of the Talmudic text is in the centre, flanked by commentaries on both sides. To make it easier for the student, there is a typographical difference between the letter used for the main text of the Gemara, and the letter used for commentaries and clarifications. The central letter of the text is in square Hebrew script (The Vilna font found today in most Hebrew computer systems is built on the basis of the letter that was cast in the Widow and Brothers Ram Publishing House pattern and is called Vilna after the name of the place of the publishing house. This font was considered innovative and advanced for its time (Friedberg, 1950). The font used for the interpretations is in the Rashi script. There are also differences in the sizes of the letters and the thickness as needed for different purposes (page marking, titles, indexing, and more). The typographic structure can be defined as a medieval "hyperlink". This fixed pattern, repeated in all Talmudic tractates, turns the text into an image and allows a large amount of information to be remembered, through a "photographic memory" of the images. Eidetic memory/photographic memory. in figure 2: the structure of the Gemara page which includes a large number of texts alongside various typographical markings that aid in learning. For example: a hollow circle refers to "Torah Or", an asterisk refers to "Masoret HaShas", a small letter in the Rashi font in parentheses, a reference to the Bach glosses, a small square letter, a reference to "Ein Mishpat". For the benefit of understanding the structure of the page, each part of the page has been marked in a different colour (See Figures 1, 2).

The structure of the page itself became a symbol and icon in Jewish visual culture even without the text inside. Ruth Calderon (2014), a Talmud researcher believes that this design, which contains an "entire library", is the pinnacle of aesthetics in Jewish culture.

The design act itself is a response to changing situations and needs, fed by different sources of influence and inspiration. Sometimes historical intersections require a new formulation of values and forms (Doner, 1999).

In the seventies and eighties of the 20th century, there was an infiltration of modern language and global values into Israeli graphic design. The attention to detail is more present in the design products.



Figure 1. The structure of a Talmudic page, from the book "Hamadrich l'talmud". Source: (Steinsaltz, 1992)

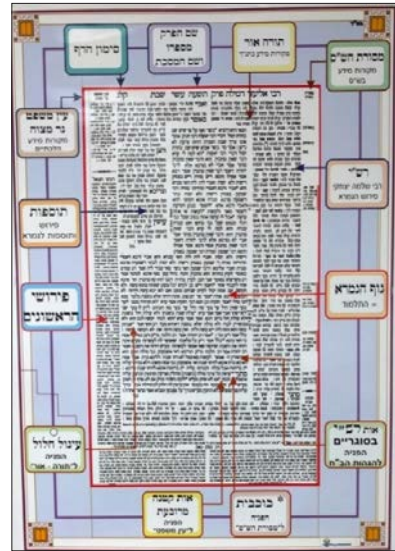


Figure 2. The structure of a Talmudic page, Source: "Lev Ladaat" the Herzog college website (<https://www.herzog.ac.il/en/english/>)

With the sophistication of printing in the last two decades of the twentieth century, several attempts were made to graphically improve the form of the Gemara page by adding spaces, indentation, using different fonts and punctuation. Some were welcomed and others with reservations.

Aim of the article

This article will deal with the iconic typography of the Talmud page, will focus on the relationship between the script and the creation of a religious identity, and will examine the changes in design and typography in the modern editions of Steinsaltz, Artscroll, and Koren starting from the 1980s, causing some of these editions to be removed from the yeshiva world, thus preventing Yeshiva students from using them.

Main research material

The edition of the Talmud by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz (Even-Israel), created a controversy when it was first released on the market in the 1980s. The graphic, typographical, and pagination design of the pages of the Gemara in this edition is different from that of the "Vilna edition" which is accepted in the yeshiva world. The Steinsaltz Talmud is punctuated, has the Hebrew letter with vowels, and comes with a literal translation, explanations, diagrams, and pictures. The translation is not purely literal, but the text is

explained due to its typography: separation of matters, addition of punctuation marks, vowels and illustrations.

The shape of the page remained only partially faithful to the original. Another change is the interpretation of the Tosafot. The Tosafot is the name of a collective work from the school of Rashi's disciples, who lived mainly in Ashkenaz and France between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. Their commentaries are always printed on the outside of the page, which appears in a square font and not in Rashi script (See Figure 3).



Figure 3. Right – Babylonian Tractate Brachot page 2a, Vilna edition;
Left – Babylonian Tractate Brachot page 2a, Steinsaltz edition.
Photo by Efrat Grossman

The pages in the Steinsaltz edition are based on the accepted division of the Talmud, but the putting in vowels and the additional interpretation led to the splitting of each page into two pages. Halbertal, Zivan, and Goodman (2010) believe that Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz's design for the Talmud, which contains punctuated and voweled texts, making the difficult text easier to read and understand, created a real revolution and is one of the pinnacles of Hebrew literature. Typographic design that makes the text accessible as something of value is also mentioned in Zisberg's words, who says that when Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook was asked, what is the most important Torah book written in our generation, he answered: "The Kehati Mishniyot" The reason is the readable re-design of the book that made it popular and accessible to many (Zisberg, 1999).

Already a decade earlier, the typographer Eliyahu Koren refers to the years of exile as years in which we got used to being satisfied with any written book regardless of its design, whereas now the time has come to consider this as part of the redemption and revival of the nation, and to make the Jewish books accessible to others. On the creation of a new letter font for the holy books he wrote:

Recognising the fact that during our national revival, no thought had yet been given to giving the public a real Hebrew Bible, and feeling that I had something to contribute to correcting this reality, I came and took it upon myself. I knew very well the magnitude of the task I was imposing on myself, as if I entered the Holy Temple inside, to redo it from both an aesthetic and a technical point of view, and I realized that I must strive to do the best I can. The task is enormous, and I must start from the beginning. I actually started from the alphabet itself (Koren, 1989).

The artist Bezalel Shatz (1912–1978), Israeli painter and sculptor. Son of Boris Shatz, founder of “Bezalel”, Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem is responsible for the graphic and typographic design of the pages of the Talmud published by Steinsaltz. The process of designing a book cover begins with the author seeing the role of the cover as part of the entire work and his design requirements are in the spirit of what is written in the book. The cover design is significant as it reflects the character, spirit, and atmosphere of the book (Gross, 2012) (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. The first edition of the Steinsaltz edition.

Right – Outer cover; Left – Inner cover page.

Photo by Efrat Grossman

As a son continuing the tradition of his father (Boris Schatz), the motifs that occupied Schatz were the Jewish past on the one hand, expressed in Jewish symbols, and the Israeli present on the other hand, expressed in motifs drawn from the world of flora and fauna in Israel. Shatz (the father) despised modern art that is disconnected from the past, and his son, formulated an “Israeli” ornamental design that combined original environmental aesthetics, history, and nature (Ofrat, 2000). Steinsaltz’s innovative idea connecting the past and future, between Jewish exile and the return to Israel can be found in the typographical combination between the outer cover and the inner cover. The design of the letters on the outer cover is made up of letters similar in shape to the

“Hatzvi” typeface of the typographer Zvi Hausman from 1954. The origins of the “Hatzvi” letters are from ancient Hebrew inscriptions from the first millennium (Molcho, 1980). The letter is angular, based on the shape of the triangle, has no serifs, and is more like the shape of a script engraved in stone. This is in comparison to the letters on the inner cover which are similar in shape to the Ashkenazi letter written with a quill.

The inner cover has three colours: black, red and white (the whiteness of the paper). On the page are various illustrations around the edges consisting of many Jewish images and symbols (the hands of priests, the star of David, the tablets of the covenant, menorah, rosettes, and other plant illustrations) in a free style and handmade. The letters for the Hebrew acronym for the words “here in the Holy City, may it be rebuilt and founded, speedily in our days” are handwritten and are integrated among the decorations and are almost invisible. The name of the publisher and the place published are also given on this page. The visual image for the cover is based on the verse “Open to me the gates of righteousness and I will enter through them” (Psalms 18:19). The design of the inner cover is reminiscent of the “Carpet Pages”, pages that are decorated with a combination of decorative motifs, geometric shapes and plant motifs alongside written texts. These pages were known in the design of Bibles before the invention of printing in the fifteenth century and they were used as opening and closing pages of the book (Freedman, 1995; Narkis, 1984).

The typeface is a handmade and decorated adaptation of the “Stam” font by Francesca Baruch (1901–1989). Born in Germany, engaged in graphic design and calligraphy. Inspired by the Ashkenazi letter, she designed the letters “Stam”, “Rachel” and “Rambam”.

The edition was characterised by its renewed, colourful and bright design, and eliminated the traditional leather binding. The use of the Israeli font and the departure from the style of the “heavily” decorated letter in favour of a vowel, thinner and less black “Frankrihal” font, whose purpose was to make the text more accessible and clearer, resulted in its exclusion from the ultra-orthodox yeshiva world (and many yeshivas also belonging to the national religious movement). This exclusion happened even though the Steinsaltz Edition received letters of approbation from important rabbis. The edition was defined as suitable for those who are lacking in knowledge to study the Talmud, but not for “scholars” (Fuchs, 1997).

The choice of the modern style, a design with the motifs of the Land of Israel, symbols with a renewed Jewish character and typography that conveys a sense of freshness, played a decisive role in the negative response of ultra-Orthodox society (Shalmon, 1990). Rabbi Elazar Man Shach Shach, (1898–2001) Leader of the ultra-Orthodox Lithuanian faction in Israel from the 1970s until his demise, wrote in 2009 a sharp criticism of the new publication:

“And it pains the heart to see that the ‘holy is swallowed up’ by one who is wise in his own eyes, spurred on by the advice of the evil inclination to write a commentary on the Gemara called ‘The Explained and Punctuated Talmud’ ... and it is true that by studying it, one removes every trace of holiness and faith. He (Steinsaltz) sets the Shas as a book of laws and as a gentile book of wisdom, God save us, and in this way, the Torah will be forgotten. And let not those who claim that those learning the Talmud will diminish, because it is our duty to preserve the pure oil in its purity, and not the abundance of the impure, and a little bit of light repels much of the darkness. And I am

very sorry that I have to cry out, but in my opinion, his books need to be ritually buried (genizah), and it is forbidden to study and bring them into the study halls. In his reasons, Shach explains that he is opposed because the new printing makes learning easier and 'the Torah was bought with labour.'”

Rabbi Steinzaltz himself claimed in one of his interviews that the strict adherence to the shape of the old page and its sanctification originates in ignorance, since Shas Vilna was never the only one (even though it was the most common), and even Rashi script is nothing more than a font invented to differentiate between the verses of the Torah and the commentary on it and it has no intrinsic value beyond that (Klein, 2012).

Shatz's letter design style is also preserved in the non-holy books he designed. The book "The bats of Acre" (1961) also uses the same "Hatzvi" style letters, illustrated in different geometric shapes freehand. Perhaps this is proof of the modernity and innovation that he wanted to embed in the design of the Gemara covers. However, while in the book "The bats of Akko" the geometric shapes appear to be random, in the design for the cover of the Talmud, the geometric shapes create the shapes of the Star of David, the Tablets of the Covenant, gates, crowns, letters, houses, flowers and more.

The graphic and typographic difference between the editions served as a source of inspiration for the publication, twenty-five years later. The real estate company "Harei Zahav" which advertises the religious settlement "Leshem" designed an ad published in the religious press in which two versions of the Gemara design appear, Vilna and Steinsalz, as a metaphor for the learning styles and as a symbol of the seriousness of the learner.

The composition of women with typography reserved for the male world only, expressed in the Rashi script, has something to teach about the feminist revolution in the national religious world (See Figure 5).



Figure 5. Advertisement for the Religious Zionist settlement of Leshem.

Photo by Efrat Grossman

The holy books in their traditional form are used as an image to “legitimise” educationally questionable products. In an ad for the Dubek cigarette company from the early 1990s, there are three holy books in open and closed states, which look as if they were taken in the middle of Torah study. Apparently, there is no direct connection between an ad for cigarettes and books, but from this ad it is understood that the cigarettes are intended for study. The centrality of books in the ad qualifies the cigarettes and makes the act of smoking justified as it increases learning concentration.

In 1989, the “Artscroll” Shas edition of the Lithuanian Jewish faction was published for the first time in the USA. The late Rabbi Meir Zalotovitch headed 80 rabbis from around the world who worked on a Gemara translated into English, with a new design. The printing is more spacious, printed on white paper, not cream, and smaller than the Vilna edition. The Schottenstein edition, named after the benefactor, although it received criticism from Rabbi Amar, the chief rabbi of Israel (Roth-Halevi, 2009), received many approbations from Israel and abroad. It is possible that Rabbi Steinsalz’s books prepared in some way the acceptance of the changes. However, it is more likely that the reason for this is the maximum preservation of the traditional typography in this edition, compared to Rabbi Steinsalz’s edition, and a greater visual similarity to the Vilna edition. In the Schottenstein edition, the shape of the original page without any changes appears on the left side and the various commentaries on the right side and on separate pages, (in the Hebrew edition, each Gemara page is spread over four pages of commentary on average) which caused the number of pages in this edition to increase sixfold and increase its price because of this.

The outer cover of the Schottenstein edition maintains the traditional style similar to the Vilna printing (See figures 6–7). The cover of the Babylonian Talmud in Hebrew is in blue leather-like paper, in English in a brown cover, while the Jerusalem Talmud is in green. The title “Talmud Bavli” is stamped in gold. Spots of colour in the shades of the cover decorate the book’s spine. The typography is traditional typography. The font has serifs similar to the “Vilna” font, the letter is hollow, in order to add a feeling of airiness and modernity to the book cover.

Stolow (2010) believes that the success of “ArtScroll” stems from the flexibility the company has adopted in regard to advertising trends and technological innovation, without compromising on the design expectations required of such a book.

The name of the tract on the outer cover is written in “Heavy Hadassa” font. Inside the book and on the explanatory pages, the fonts are modern and without serifs. The fonts “Heavy Hadassa” and “Heavy Hatzvi” are used as title letters (name of the tractate). For the written text, the fonts “Heavy Hadassa” and “Hadassa Normal” are also used.

Images of gates in the form of an architectural gate structure are printed on the outer cover, which are also printed on the inside opening page. These gates are also based on the verse “This is the gate of God” (Psalms 18:20) as well as “Let us come to his gates with thanksgiving” (Psalms 9:4), and are closely identified with the gates of traditional Torah literature (Haberman, 1969; Spiegel, 2005).

During the 2000s, under pressure from the ultra-orthodox public and his publishing houses, Rabbi Steinsaltz changed the design, and issued a special edition of the Talmud with his commentary in a design more suitable for this public. The letters “Koren” are stamped in gold on a brown leather cover, a row of columns decorated with a colourful texture and an internal pagination similar to the Schottenstein publication

“page by page”, the original page from the Vilna printing press and the annotation page on the other side. The inner page of the Talmud was changed earlier and became a more conservative decorative frame than its predecessor based on drawings of rosettes, flowers, and the temple lamp.



Figure 6. The outer cover for the Babylonian Talmud in Hebrew, Schottenstein edition.
Photo by Efrat Grossman

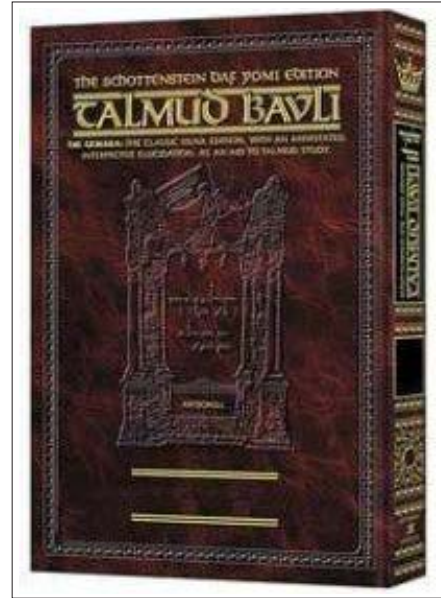


Figure 7. The outer cover for the Babylonian Talmud in English, Schottenstein edition.
Photo by Efrat Grossman

Apparently, nothing has changed except for the page layout and design, and this edition received a place of honour in many ultra-Orthodox houses as well.

The Talmud published by Schottenstein was not the only one translated into English. In 2012, Rabbi Steinsaltz joined the publishing house “Koren” and together they published a Gemara translated into English, which contains, for the first time since the appearance of the Talmud, color photographs and illustrations as well as a wide variety of study aids. An iPad application was added to the new version, which allows learning Gemara interactively from anywhere. The font on the outer cover is “Koren”. “The English edition achieves a balance between tradition and innovation. ‘Babylonian Talmud Koren’ preserves the traditional Vilna page, and allows people to engage in the traditional process of learning Talmud while at the same time being technologically up-to-date” (Miller, 2012).

Figure 8: The inner cover of the Gemara published by Steinsaltz. 1994. The beginning of the change and giving a more conservative image.

Figure 9: The second edition of the Talmud published by Rabbi Steinsaltz and the publishing house Koren (2004). An alignment with the characteristics of ultra-Orthodox typographic design.



Figure 8. Babylonian Talmud Steinsaltz edition Inner cover, 1994.
Photo by Efrat Grossman



Figure 9. The second Talmud edition, 2004.
Photo by Efrat Grossman

Schiffman believes that the great challenge of modernity is preserving the Talmud as central to Jewish life. Changes of the types of Steinsaltz and Schottenstein, introducing modernity into the pages of the Talmud certainly help to preserve it not only as a textbook but as a way of life that sanctifies the ongoing dialogue between the written Torah expressed in the letter of the text and humanity and the plurality of opinions expressed in all the comments and additions surrounding the main text. Thus, the very shape of the page creates a reflection of the study life: the student, his “sparring partner” and the text sit in front of each other and discuss with each other (Schiffman, 2005).

Conclusions

Throughout the years of exile, the Jewish people converted their birthright into a text. A strong connection exists between the text and creating a religious identity. This kind of connection was one of the factors for the adoption of the Hebrew writing system, the Hebrew alphabet in Jewish culture, as a main element in which the heritage and historical traces can be recognised.

Hebrew has a metaphorical basis. The letter is a representation of higher worlds and is found in connection with the Holy. The mention of the time of the creation of the letters, similar to other miracles that were created at that time, the number of laws dealing with the rules of the typography of the Torah book, and the adoption of the handwriting of the scholars as an independent font or as an approbation letter for books or other products, only strengthen this approach.

The preservation of the canonical Jewish bookcase also includes its external form, the size of the letter, the structure of the page, the design of the cover, the colours, and more.

Visual differences exist between the holy books in the ultra-orthodox world and those same books in the secular and/or national religious world. While the former will retain the form of the book (even if with slight changes) from the past, the secular public and the national religious public will have books in a wide selection of fonts, in colours that are not just black and white, and with the addition of pictures, decorations, and didactic annotations to help the reader.

During the second half of the 21st century, attempts were made to visually change the holy books as we were used to seeing them until then. The Rinat Israel Siddur (prayer book), Siddur Koren, the Talmud project of Rabbi Steinsaltz, and others tried to extract a new “Israeli design” from the style of the past. The question of preservation versus innovation was at the doorstep of the designers in various fields. This includes the visual cues of the book and what it represents, the technological progress in the printing industry, making the book more accessible for reading, study, and prayer, adapting the book to additional target audiences, and more. In many cases, a new form of book was chosen, but sometimes this created a strong backlash to the point of excluding certain books from the study halls and synagogues. An example of this is Rabbi Steinsaltz’s project of redesigning the Talmud. Although his goal was to make the study accessible to those who have difficulty by making the Gemara page more readable with the help of a new selection of fonts, addition of punctuation, vowels, and greater spacing between the lines and not a design purely for the needs of innovation, the change was not accepted by the ultra-orthodox public and parts of the national religious public.

The prospects for further research on this topic. The current study is a fertile ground for further research that will explore the different attitudes towards the typography of Judaic texts, and the advantages and disadvantages of adapting the typography to the challenges of time and society. During the second half of the twentieth century, printing became readily available and affordable. This enabled books to be printed with larger letters and a more spacious layout, thus facilitating learning. Today, the rapidly evolving technology allows any student or teacher to easily create innovative designs of traditional texts using online design tools and artificial intelligence.

This study, as mentioned, focused on the iconography of the Talmud page and the controversy that emerged around its adaptation (altering its traditional form), to aid learners who struggle with studying. This was achieved through typographic modifications, drawing inspiration from modern design concepts.

Future research studies can expand and examine the extent to which Judaic literature can adapt to the world of design and pedagogy in the 21st century. These studies may examine whether yeshiva students should be allowed the use of laptops, iPads, and computer applications during their study sessions, or continue studying from traditionally designed books.

What is the relationship between conservation and innovation in the design of Jewish texts regarding different target audiences? What is the relationship between innovative pedagogy and the preservation of our ancestors' tradition?

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Шрифт і створення релігійної ідентичності: типографіка Талмуду

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Мета статті — дослідити особливості типографіки сторінок Талмуду, проаналізувати взаємозв'язок між шрифтом і релігійною ідентичністю. У статті розглянуто зміни

в типографському дизайні (починаючи з 1980-х рр.) у таких сучасних виданнях, як Steinsaltz, Artscroll і Koren, що призвели до вилучення деяких із цих видань зі світу ешиви. *Результати дослідження.* Талмуд є центральним і найвпливовішим текстом у світі юдейського права, а його вивчення має велике духовне значення. Багато людей вважають його засобом самовираження та зв'язку з усною традицією Тори. У другій половині ХХ ст. були ініційовані зміни до традиційного оформлення юдейських текстів, метою яких було створити новий «ізраїльський дизайн». Дизайнери намагалися знайти баланс між збереженням і нововведеннями в таких аспектах, як дизайн книг, технологічні досягнення в друкарській промисловості, доступність для читання, навчання та молитви, а також орієнтація на широку цільову аудиторію. Здебільшого були обрані нові формати книг, проте такі зміни викликали сильний опір у деяких юдейських групах, що призвело до заборони їх вивчення в закладах освіти та синагогах. *Наукова новизна.* Стаття доповнює попередні дослідження щодо видань на івриті, підкреслюючи їх роль у передачі соціального, освітнього й ідеологічного послання (незалежно від змісту письмового тексту). *Висновки.* Юдейські тексти, що використовуються в ультраортодоксальному світі, візуально відрізняються за оформленням від світських та/або національно-релігійних. Ультраортодокси ретельно зберігають традиційний формат юдейської книги (хоча і з незначними змінами), тоді як світський світ і частина національно-релігійної громадськості віддають перевагу книгам з різноманітними шрифтами, яскравими дизайнами та зображеннями, прикрасами та дидактичними поясненнями. Фіксований шаблон Талмуду, який є абсолютно однаковим у всіх трактатах, створює візуальне представлення тексту, завдяки чому великий обсяг інформації можна запам'ятати через «ейдетичну пам'ять» зображень. Видання Талмуду рабина Адина Штейнзальца (Koren), яке змінило традиційний макет сторінок і зробило текст доступним, лише частково зберегло вірність оригіналу та спричинило справжню революцію. Для одних це інноваційне видання є вершиною єврейської літератури, тоді як для інших воно сприймається як порушення священної літератури та повинно бути забороненим. Між ультраортодоксальним світом і єврейською типографікою завжди існував тісний зв'язок. Єврейські літери є наріжними каменями в оформленні Святого Письма. Однак ставлення ультраортодоксального світу до сучасних видань на івриті є двоїстим — з деяким схваленням, але здебільшого з сильними застереженнями.

Ключові слова: Талмуд; типографіка; Ізраїль; ультраортодоксальний юдаїзм